

## DAFFODILS IN 1952

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"To go or not to go" is a question provided annually by various Daffodil shows in this area. The sponsors like as many exhibits as possible from commercial growers, and one who raises seedlings is loath to be absent from home when new crosses are coming into flower; particularly so when the blooming season is short, and is interspersed with inclement days, making the time to observe and study the flowers brief at best. Yet, in spite of one's reluctance to leave them, it is the ordinary procedure to spend a goodly percentage of time away from the flowers after spending months in anticipation of their opening!

Too frequently the weather is unpropitious during and preceding the blooming period. Following a series of severe winters, the past one proved more nearly normal for this section, and while we had our usual late fall frosts, they were insufficient to halt the blooming of *Polyanthus* Primroses and other flowers of the hardier clan. Damp mild weather continued until the first of January when the temperature dropped to about ten degrees below the freezing point and gave rise to fears that we might again be due for severe weather; but that was not to be, and there were comparatively few frosty nights after this date. There were two damaging frosts at about the end of the season but Daffodils suffered little.

As usual, our first flowers were from *N. asturiensis* opening in late December, a record with us. A few days later *N. bulbocodium* X NYLON opened, soon to be succeeded by *N. romieuxii*; the former is reminiscent of *N. bulbocodium* var. *monophyllus*, one of its parents, I believe, and the latter carried some of the sulphur lemon tones so much sought after in large trumpet varieties. Not long after these bloomed, *N. cyclamineus* opened its jaunty, spritely blossoms which briefly preceded those of its descendants, MITE and FEBRUARY GOLD. The former is most cheerful with its perky little blossoms with perianth segments somewhat less reflexed than in its parent.

There were a number of potted large flowered Daffodils grown as well as the species and their first generation hybrids. CONTENT (Fig. 13) and TRUTH gave superb blooms as usual, and FAIRY DREAM and ROSTOV were very lovely, but these will be passed by to consider some of the later blooming species. *N. triandrus* var. *albus* is always delightful when well grown. *N. juncifolius* and its near-kin, *N. rupicola* are intriguing elfin flowers, but one of the loveliest of all was *N. watieri* as grown in a box of perhaps 50 bulbs, with many pure white, fairy-like blossoms bidding for notice.

Although there were few frosts, the temperature hovered just a few degrees above freezing so much of the time that plant growth advanced

but little for weeks after the turn of the year. None of the very early varieties came on until after the first of March in the open, unprotected field. The first blooms of FEBRUARY GOLD, MARCH SUNSHINE, MITE, CIBOLA, SACAJAWEA, and FORESIGHT opened almost simultaneously. The earliest of the large golden yellow Daffodils with us, CIBOLA is a flower

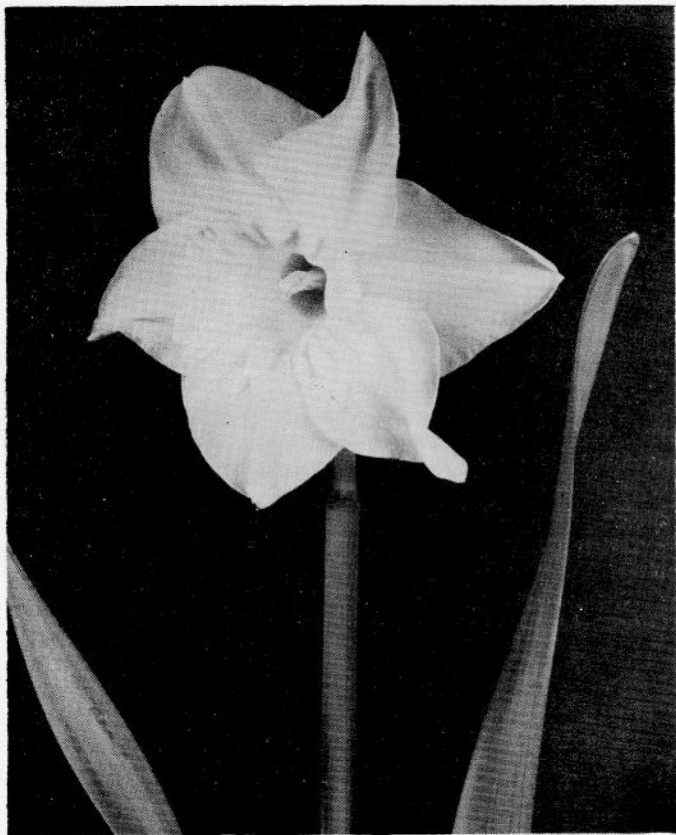


Fig. 13. Hybrid *Narcissus*—CONTENT. Photo by Grant E. Mitsch.

of excellent keeping qualities. It has quite a broad, flat, smooth perianth, and a large bell-shaped crown, broadly flanged and reflexing as it develops. It should prove an excellent cut flower. Just as early, and also a large flower, SACAJAWEA, a FORTUNE x KIMBA derivative, is somewhat reminiscent of WHITELEY GEM but twice as large and has preceded it in bloom here. Having somewhat more pointed perianth segments than FORTUNE, it is about the same size flower with clean yellow coloring except for a wide band of orange red on the crown.

While waiting for the first field blooms to open, we were enjoying some beautiful pot grown Daffodils, but one is never quite satisfied with only those grown under controlled conditions, however perfect they are, for the call of the out-of-doors cannot be evaded by the true gardener! One only wishes that the flowering season were longer! Counting some of the miniature species which open indoors, there are about four months of continuous bloom, but the bulk of the large flowering garden varieties come and go within a period of six weeks, and in even less time some years. Even though the winter was comparatively mild, our season was a brief one this year; for once the flowers were well started to opening, a succession of warm days brought on everything rapidly. Among the rather early flowers are some seedlings from MITE and MALVERN GOLD, one of which bears very perfect little flowers with smooth flat perianth, and rather a long, well balanced crown of clear lemon yellow throughout. A good increaser and free bloomer, it carries its flowers with good poise on stems more or less tinted with yellow. This dainty star-like Daffodil has been named ESTRELLITA. Another seedling of *N. cyclamineus* ancestry and of rich golden yellow coloring is usually the first of all to bloom, excluding the species; the seed parent in this instance being MAGNIFICENCE. Others of their clan to which we look forward to seeing each year include PEPYS, TREWIRGIE, GOLDEN CYCLE, and PEEPING TOM, the first named being particularly interesting and unique, but unfortunately, rather slow on increase. Even more distinct is CYCLATAZ which made its first appearance here this year.

The miniatures include some very fascinating members among their numbers, and we were much intrigued by the perfectly formed TANAGRA a larger descendent of *N. asturiensis*. The jonquil family includes several most delightful representatives, perhaps the finest of all being APRIL TEARS which gives generously its graceful stems carrying two to four exquisite pendant blooms of clear yellow with slightly paler coronas. To the same coterie belongs the somewhat paler and easier blooming HAWERA, and the smaller PEASEBLOSSOM; and of quite different form but still most appealing are BEBOP, SUN DISC, and LABELLE, each a little jewel. Of still different type and ancestry is HIAWASSEE, a "Paper White" hybrid, which appears quite hardy but is not always a free bloomer;—perhaps severe cold may be a deterrent to its flowering, as this year it performed better than ever before.

Although we had anticipated exceptional bloom this season, Daffodils on the whole were of about average quality. Many of the red cups were especially fine and came with stems of exceptional length, due perhaps more to soil and situation than to weather. Coloring was very good on DIOLITE, BAHAM, ROUGE, and many others, and they were taller than I had previously seen them. There were many splendid large flowers of KRAKATOA with most vivid orange red crowns. ARDOUR was beautiful as usual and came relatively earlier than normal this year. Nigeria is always good but seemed to surpass itself, while CALIFORNIA GOLD stood out as a most strikingly colored flower and would have been near the very top in quality except for a long neck. Both ARMADA and CEYLON

are examples of the strides being made by breeders, the former being of excellent quality and a most striking flower, while the other approaches the ideal in quality and finish. Both develop much of their color after first opening and hold it well whereas so many red cups tend to fade out after being open a few days. There was some variation in the performance of the later blooming yellow-reds this year for GARLAND which ordinarily has a crown of quite solid coloring came with orange at the base of the cup and a distinct band of deeper shade, making it resemble a larger ARANJUEZ.

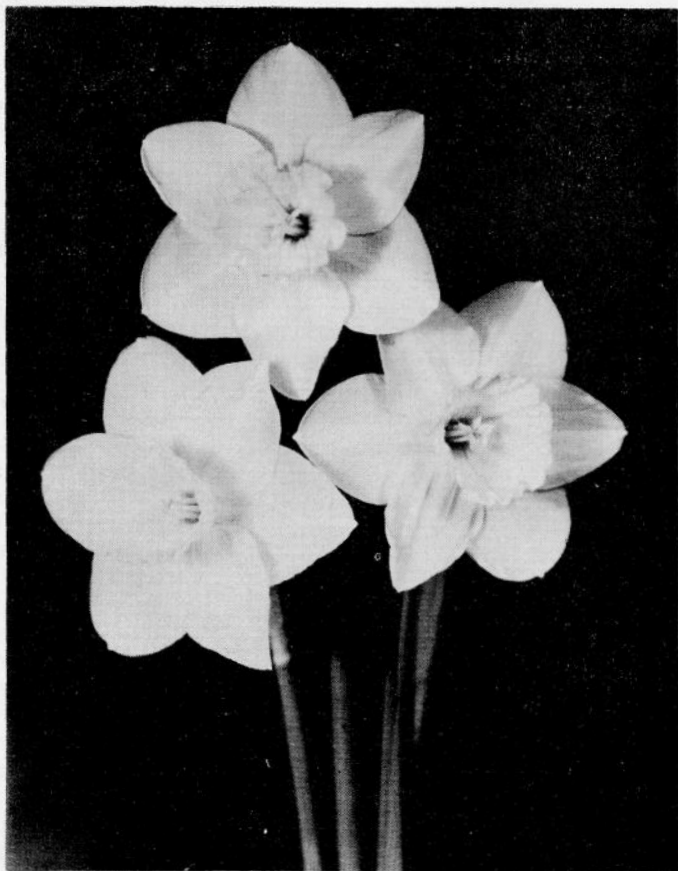


Fig. 14. Hybrid *Narcissus*—BINKIE. Photo by Grant E. Mitsch.

Improvements are now difficult of attainment in the class under consideration. A seedling described before and now named PARACUTIN, from KLINGO x ARDOUR came somewhat rough this year but still carried about the most fiery orange red coloring that we have observed in a

flower of this type, a shade more nearly approaching that found in some of the red and white daffodils.

Those varieties having white perianths and colored crowns were somewhat better on the whole this year than some seasons, even the older variety, *LADY KESTIVEN* having retained its brilliance for several days in warm sunshine. As usual, *CRETE* was one of the finest of this group being possessed of a most beautiful rounded perianth of much substance. *MATAPAN*, *OTRANTO*, *PAPRIKA*, and *TEBOURBA* came with beautiful form and intense brilliance. As a garden flower, there is certainly nothing to excel *LIMERICK*, which is quite late in blooming. A seedling from *LADY KESTIVEN* and *HADES* which has been carried for several years was quite impressive with its white rounded perianth and brilliant crown, nicely frilled at the edge. Among varieties with larger crowns, *FERMOY*, *KILWORTH*, and *MONACO* were impressive again this year, while *SIGNAL LIGHT* looked promising in its first blooming. Some years ago among our seedlings appeared a very frilly orange cupped flower from open pollenized *JOHN EVELYN*. This was crossed with *SCARLET LEADER* and from the few resulting seedlings two or three were exceptionally early blooming and had large rounded white perianths with good sized crowns of rich orange red. While the coloring is not very lasting and the flowers could stand additional polish, they provide a bright spot very early in the season.

Some of the best yellow trumpets came from *KINGSCOURT* x *GALWAY*, while from *CAMBERWELL KING* x *MORTLAKE*, and from *CAMBERWELL KING* x *GALWAY* there are several seedlings that look very promising after having bloomed two or three years. But it is the *KING OF THE NORTH* x *CONTENT* group that gives most of interest, including clear yellows, pale sulphur lemons, and reversed bi-colors. Three of the latter were the best in this class that we had this year, having well formed, smooth flat lemon perianths, and finely balanced, nicely flanged trumpets which, as they developed, became almost white inside. The clear lemon-self, *FRONTIER*, was the best we had ever seen it this year, and *MOON-STRUCK* gave superb giant size blooms. *GRAPEFRUIT* and *MULATTO* were not quite up to par, while *SPELLBINDER* and *MOONRISE* looked good on their first appearance. We have bloomed numerous seedlings from *BINKIE* (Fig. 14) but none to equal it.

In white trumpets, the very refined and highly polished *CANTATRICE* still maintains its position at the top of the list, although *BROUGHSHANE* and *KANCHENJUNGA* (Fig. 15) by virtue of their spectacular size and form elicit much more comment from visitors. A seedling from *ADA FINCH* x *FORTUNE* which we have grown for some years is considerably larger than either of the above, and while far from ideal in form and balance, it has many good habits, and is so striking that few visitors can see any other white when it is in bloom. From *KANCHENJUNGA* x *ZERO* and *ZERO* x *CANTATRICE* the average of good white flowers was exceptional. Good form and purity were the rule here but it remains to be seen whether they have sufficient stamina and vigor. With such good whites as *ZERO*, *LUDLOW*, *TRUTH*, *KILLALOE* and others available it is difficult to make improvements in their class.

GREEN ISLAND (Fig. 16) has again demonstrated its value for breeding as several of the finest flowers of the season came from it. BREAD AND CHEESE x GREEN ISLAND produced three or four very fine flowers of which the best had an exceptionally large, geometrically perfect white perianth and large bowl shaped crown. From POLINDRA x GREEN ISLAND there were numbers of satin smooth beautifully formed flowers with cups tinted lemon or apricot, and a large series from TUNIS x GREEN ISLAND included so many interesting flowers that it was difficult to make selections, so many inherited much of their pollen parent's

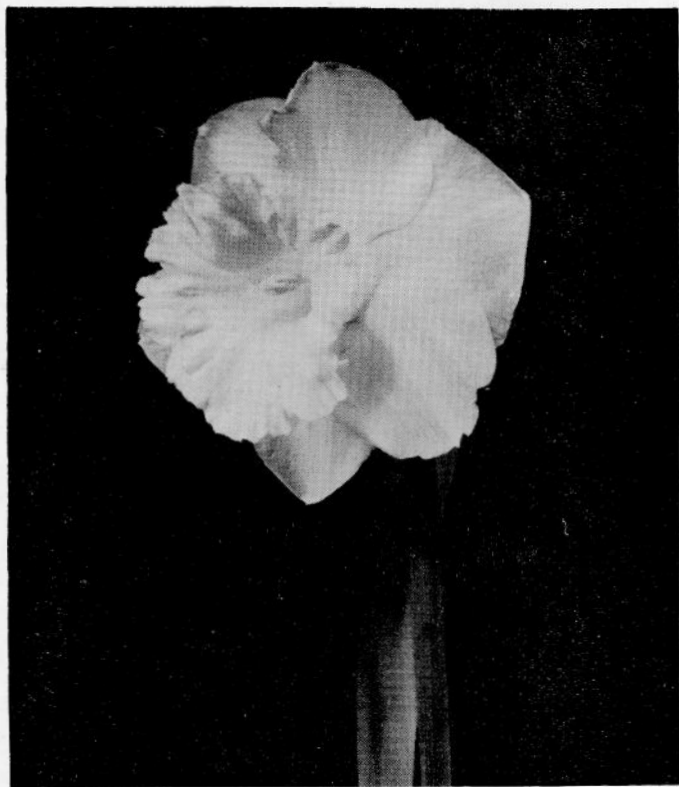


Fig. 15. Hybrid *Narcissus*—KANCHENJUNGA. Photo by Grant E. Mitsch.

form, with colorings in the crown associated with TUNIS seedlings, including buff, apricot, and salmony tones together with cream, ivory, and soft lemon. Many give promise of having immense vigor, and should be good garden or exhibition flowers. As reported before, the interesting series from GREEN ISLAND x CHINESE WHITE include some of the most satisfying, perfectly moulded flowers we have grown, but from such parents it is difficult to make improvements. Although variety in coloring can be added. The pink from GREEN ISLAND x GLENSHANE was not



quite so fine as last year but was still very nice, and several more with pink tintings appeared among its sister seedlings.

This was not a particularly good pink year as many of this color were lacking in their usual depth of tone. MABEL TAYLOR was less striking than a year ago and ROSARIO was paler than some seasons. Many others including WILD ROSE, most of the Australian, and the Dutch pinks did not find the season to their liking. The same was true with many of the seedlings although a few gave us better color than normal. Perhaps the most vivid, glowing, orange toned rosy pink came

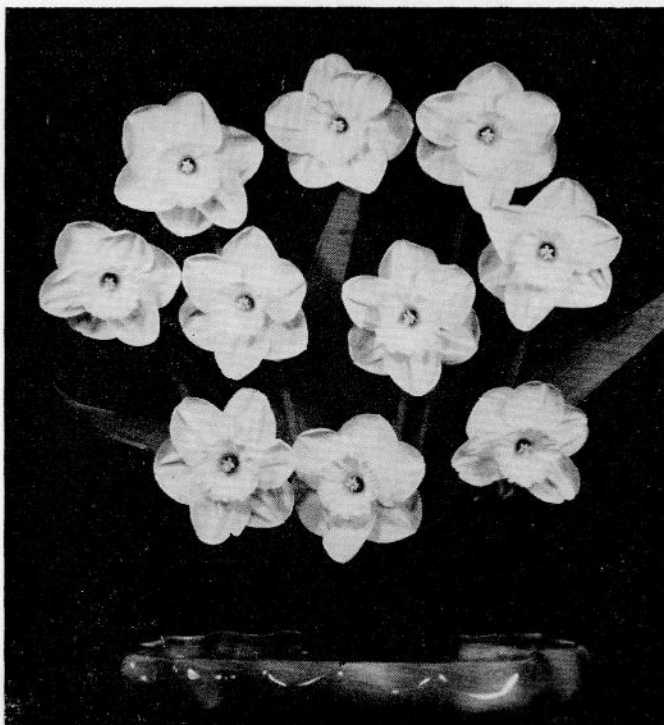


Fig. 16. Hybrid *Narcissus*—GREEN ISLAND. Photo by Grant E. Mitsch.

in a flower from a seedling crossed with INTERIM. Another good sized, well formed flower from a ROSARY x MRS. BACKHOUSE seedling crossed with MABEL TAYLOR was nearly its equal in brilliance. Most of the pinks either do not hold their color long, are indifferent in form, or are fickle in performance; being good one year and not the next, or proving outstanding in one region and mediocre in another climate. Perhaps eventually, out of the many thousands of seedlings being grown by hundreds of fanciers, a really good pink of consistent performance will appear.

Good bicolor trumpets are not plentiful but among the large cupped varieties this is one of the strongest color groupings. PREAMBLE, SPITZBERGEN, TROUSSEAU, TROSTAN, and GLENGARRIFF are about the best of the trumpets, but only the first mentioned one is a strongly contrasted bicolor. Of the large cupped kinds, it will be long before POLINDRA and BODILLY are replaced although there are many fine new ones that are distinctive in form, among which is STATUE, an elegant, tall, giant white with lemon crown. At its best, SEBASTOPOL is well near perfect but in some seasons the perianth is not sufficiently clean, having a slight olive cast. TUDOR MINSTREL looked promising on its first blooming here, and a seedling which we call FESTIVITY has given us immense blooms with perianths of good substance and so flat they appear to have come from a press. Were it not for its habit of tilting downward at an angle when freshly opened it would, we think, be the peer of all in its class.

Among the most unique of the Daffodils we have bloomed is ARTIST'S MODEL, a large flower with white perianth and quite large nearly flat crown of salmon orange with a recurved flange pressed back against the perianth. Several other flowers from the same grower, Mr. Lewis, in New Zealand, mostly varieties on the border line between large and small cups, have proven good here. They have rounded white perianths with crowns of yellow or ivory, bordered with various shades of orange, lemon, and apricot. AUTOWIN, MARIE LOUISE, PAPANUI QUEEN, and SATIN QUEEN are a few that appear to be best and well worthy of growing, all of them being late flowering. The lovely GALILEE is of somewhat similar type; perhaps not quite as large but a bit smoother.

To finish the season we are treated with poets and the ethereal, cool green eyed flowers of which CUSHENDALL, DALLAS, and FRIGID are favorites with us. As we had quite warm weather after the early flowers opened, the season was short and there was too little time to fully enjoy the Daffodils, but like always, there were compensations for every disappointment.